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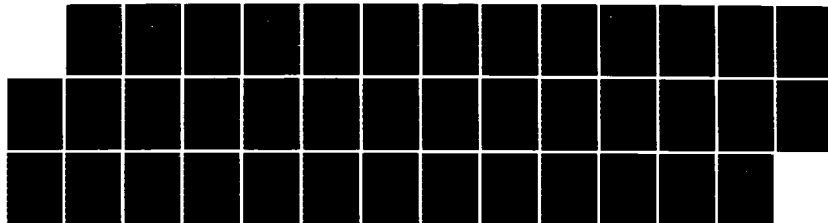
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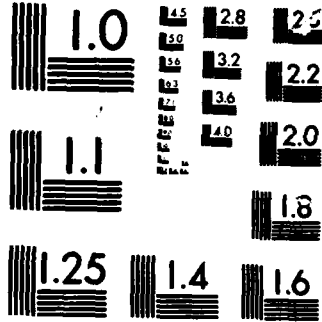
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# AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

## STUDENT REPORT

RAPHAEL SEMMES: A LEADERSHIP STUDY

MAJOR LYNNWOOD M. COCKERHAM 86-0555

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**TITLE RAPHAEL SEMMES: A LEADERSHIP STUDY**

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**Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.**

**AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE  
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One of the naval strategies of the Confederacy in the American Civil War was to destroy US merchant shipping. The best known and most successful of the commerce raiders was Raphael Semmes. This study analyzes the leadership of Semmes while he was captain of the Sumter and the Alabama. The study reviews key events of the Sumter and the Alabama from April 1861 to June 1864. Then the study identifies Semmes' leadership qualities which helped make his wartime mission a success.			
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## PREFACE

The Confederacy in the American Civil War hoped to defend its right to secede from the Union. The hopes of the South depended on its army led by generals such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. To apply pressure on the ability of the North to support the war, the South decided to destroy US merchant shipping with a small fleet of commerce destroyers. The best known and most successful captain of these raiders was Raphael Semmes. He did more than anyone else to drive US commerce from the sea.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER 86-0555

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR LYNNWOOD M. COCKERHAM, USAF

TITLE RAPHAEL SEMMES: A LEADERSHIP STUDY

I. Purpose: To examine the leadership of Raphael Semmes while he was captain of the Sumter and the Alabama during the American Civil War.

II. Problem: Military leaders today need to study military leaders of the past. Relatively little has been written about Raphael Semmes in comparison to other Civil War leaders such as Lee and Grant.

III. Data: When the South seceded from the Union, Raphael Semmes resigned his commission with the US Navy to fight for the Confederacy. Part of the Confederate naval strategy was to destroy US merchant shipping. Semmes was the most effective commerce destroyer for the South. As captain of the Sumter and later the Alabama, he destroyed 82 US merchantmen valued at \$6 million. He avoided capture by fleets of Yankee warships. His crew members were mostly foreigners who wanted prize money from captured ships. As a captain, Semmes exhibited several positive leadership qualities. Before the war he learned all he could about sailing. He studied both domestic and international law. He developed his skills in writing and speaking. His

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decision-making ability was exceptional. With limited information about the enemy, he made long-range plans that led him to enemy commerce while avoiding enemy warships. He knew the nature of his men and satisfied their needs when possible. He ruled with strict discipline, but his men learned to serve out of loyalty to their leader. Behind these qualities was a character of high principles and sincere patriotism.

IV. Conclusions: The accomplishments of the Sumter and the Alabama are noteworthy. The leadership of Raphael Semmes was the main contributing factor to their success. A study of Raphael Semmes will provide insight into qualities needed in today's leaders.

V. Recommendations: The US Air Force should continue to encourage the study of past military leaders to learn qualities needed in today's leaders.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

In 1861 Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory issued the following order to Commander Raphael Semmes: "On reaching the high seas you are to do the enemy's commerce the greatest injury in the shortest time. Choose your own cruising grounds. Burn, sink, and destroy, and be guided always by the laws of the nations and of humanity" (4:793). In the next 3 years Semmes captured 82 Union merchantmen valued at \$6 million (13:37). He also avoided capture by fleets of Yankee warships and successfully argued international law in foreign ports where he took on supplies. Altogether the Confederate cruisers were so successful in their mission that US marine insurance rose by 900 percent and over 700 Union merchant ships changed to British registry (4:792). According to Gosnell in Rebel Raider, the threat of these cruisers drove the US from its mighty maritime position which it did not recover until World War II (6:196). Raphael Semmes, as captain of the Sumter and the Alabama, did more than any other person to accomplish these results (1:ix).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the leadership of Raphael Semmes while he was captain of the Sumter and the Alabama from May 1861 to June 1864. It is believed such a study will provide valuable insight for today's leaders. Since the focus is on leadership analysis, biographical details on Semmes and historical facts will be in a condensed form. Also the author assumes the reader is familiar with the American Civil War.

Why a study of Raphael Semmes? One reason is his successful accomplishments as a combat leader. Another reason is the relative lack of modern analysis of Semmes in comparison to other Civil War leaders. A final reason is the author's personal interest. The author was raised in Alabama where the Confederacy and its leaders are part of the heritage.

Before the leadership of Semmes can be analyzed, it is important to understand the training and life experiences that helped make the Semmes of 1861. Therefore the rest of this chapter will review the life of Semmes before he took command of the Sumter in May of 1861. Then, chapter two will examine key events of the Sumter between April 1861 and April 1862. Chapter three will examine key events of the Alabama from August 1862 to June

1864. Finally, chapter four will analyze the leadership of Semmes in light of the information presented in previous chapters.

Raphael Semmes was born in Maryland on 27 September 1809. He was orphaned as a child and raised by a well-to-do uncle and aunt in Maryland (6:3). Semmes began his naval training in 1826 at the age of 17 when he was appointed a midshipman. Since there was no naval academy then, Semmes received almost all of his training at sea. On his first ship, the Lexington, he sailed to Trinidad to return the remains of Commodore Perry. Semmes received almost 5 years experience in the West Indies, the Mediterranean Sea, and along the Atlantic seaboard. In the 1820s navigation was based to a large extent on personal knowledge because sea lanes were often improperly charted. It was fortunate for Semmes that much of his training was in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean (10:14-15).

Semmes' probationary period of 5 years ended in September 1831, and he began a brief period of schooling. His practical knowledge and scholastic ability amazed his instructors and examiners. As a result, in April 1832 he was rated at the top of his class and received the rank of passed midshipman (10:16).

In the peacetime Navy of 1832, officers were numerous but positions were scarce. Semmes remained in uniform for a year, but his duty was master of chronometers. Next, he received a 2-year leave of absence which he spent reading law in the office of his brother. He was admitted to the bar in 1835, but he could not bring himself to resign from the Navy (10:16).

In July 1835 Semmes returned to sea duty where he gained the reputation among his colleagues of being more of a scholar than a seaman. He was interested in literature and acquired ability in speaking and writing. Also, his hobbies included studying geography and natural history (10:17). One of his superiors, Admiral David Porter, remembered Semmes as one with taste more like a scholar than a dashing naval officer (10:17). In spite of this reputation, Semmes' seamanship was above average and gained him steady promotion (10:17).

Between 1841 and 1843 Semmes served in the Navy Yard at Pensacola, Florida, and made a decision important to his future. In 1841 he bought land on the Perdido River in Alabama. Once he moved his family, he considered himself a citizen of Alabama. This was consistent with the Southern concept of the nation. One's first loyalty was to the commonwealth of his home. United States citizenship was secondary (6:4).

When war broke out with Mexico in 1846, Semmes commanded the brig Somer as part of a blockade off Vera Cruz. During the short

time of this command Semmes gained a good reputation for seamanship and energy on duty. Unfortunately for Semmes, his ship was lost in a storm after a few weeks on station; however, he was cleared of any error by a court of inquiry (6:6).

After he lost the Somer, Semmes received a diplomatic mission into the interior of Mexico. He was sent ahead of General Winfield Scott's army to question the Mexican government about the treatment of US prisoners. By the time he reached the front lines, the prisoners had escaped. It would have been difficult for Semmes to return to the fleet, so he joined the staff of General W. J. Worth. Semmes remained with the army until the end of the campaign. This nonstandard situation gave Semmes a unique experience. He had experience as a sailor and a soldier (6:6-7).

For several months after the Mexican War, Semmes commanded the Electra and the Flirt patrolling the southern seaboard and cruising the Caribbean. During this time he increased his knowledge of these waters. According to his son, Spencer Semmes, Raphael Semmes had more real sea duty than any other officer of comparable length of service. In 1849 he was put in inactive service and never again assigned to a United States warship (10:24-25).

Even though Semmes became inactive in the Navy, he did not waste his time. In the same year he moved his home to Mobile, Alabama. In Mobile he was able to give his undivided attention to the law profession. Also, he became interested in politics and wrote as a hobby. In fact, in 1851 he wrote a best seller about his experiences in the Mexican War, Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican War (10:25).

In 1855 Semmes came to the top of the promotion list and was called back to active duty as a commander. Because of his talent and interest in science, he was assigned as a lighthouse inspector along the Gulf of Mexico. He served in this capacity until 1858 when he was appointed secretary of the Lighthouse Board in Washington. He served in this position until his resignation in 1861 (10:25).

During the decade before the war, Semmes developed the belief that independence was the only solution for the South. As stated earlier, Semmes' loyalty was to the state. He believed the Constitution guaranteed the individual liberties of the separate units. In fact, Semmes felt the biggest danger to the Union was to have only a few states of unequal size. In such a situation one or two large states might dominate the smaller ones (10:25).

As the war grew nearer, Semmes' belief that the Constitution could preserve the Republic gave way. When Lincoln was elected President in 1860, Semmes felt this denied the co-equality of the

South with the North. When South Carolina withdrew from the Union, he concluded the quarrel could not be settled peaceably. As a result, early in 1861 he let his superiors know of his intentions to resign if Alabama seceded. Because of obligation, honor, and personal desire, Semmes went with his home state (10:27).

Even before his resignation Semmes outlined a naval strategy for the South if hostilities began. Realizing the limited naval resources of the South, he recommended commerce destruction as a way to put pressure on the North. He envisioned a fleet of privateers doing this job instead of the Confederate Navy (6:8). He did not see himself actively involved in this role (10:41).

On 14 February 1861, Semmes received a telegram requesting his presence in Montgomery. Realizing this was a call to active duty, he resigned his commission. After caring for his family, he left for the Confederate capital. After arriving in Montgomery, he did not immediately get the sea duty he hoped for (10:36-37).

Jefferson Davis thought munitions were the most urgent need of the Confederacy, and he chose Semmes to help in this area. He asked Semmes to postpone his desire for sea duty to return north to buy munitions from private firms. Semmes made New York City his headquarters and was able to ship considerable amounts of munitions south. While Semmes was in New York City, the Confederate Secretary of the Navy wired him to look for steamers available for purchase. Semmes searched the harbors in the area but did not find any suitable ships. Merchants were becoming cautious of Semmes, and rumors said he might be arrested as a spy. Sensing the danger, Semmes left New York and returned to Montgomery on 4 April 1861 (6:8-9).

On 12 April 1861, the South attacked Fort Sumter, and Semmes immediately met with Secretary Mallory to request sea duty. During the same meeting Semmes urged the Secretary to accept the strategy of commerce destruction. One problem was that the South had no naval vessels suitable for the mission. Semmes reviewed a list of possibilities with the Secretary and chose a small propeller steamer named the Habana (6:9-10). Semmes said, "Give me that ship; I think I can make her answer the purpose" (10:42).

On April 18, 1861 Secretary Mallory gave Semmes command of the Habana under her new name, the Sumter. Mallory's instruction to Semmes were broad, allowing Semmes a great deal of flexibility. "On reaching the high seas you are to do the enemy's commerce the greatest injury in the shortest time. Choose your own cruising grounds. Burn, sink, and destroy, and be guided always by the laws of the nations and of humanity" (4:793).



## Chapter Two

### SEMME'S AND THE SUMTER

After receiving instructions from Secretary Mallory, Semmes took command of the Sumter in New Orleans on 22 April 1861. The Habana had been a passenger liner; therefore, Semmes had to make numerous changes to make the Sumter into a man-of-war. He was able to supervise the entire operation because of his experience and ability. He strengthened the deck, protected the engine, and changed the rigging. At best the Sumter would be slow and vulnerable, but Semmes was determined to make do. While the construction was underway, he gathered munitions from all parts of the country and taught local craftsmen to cast shells. Also during this period Semmes received his officers and crew. The most notable of these was First Lieutenant John McIntosh Kell, who would serve with Semmes throughout the war. In spite of all the work needed, the Sumter was ready by the end of May and christened on 3 June (6:11-16).

Semmes, anxious to get to sea, was angered by the naval blockade of the harbor. He wrote, "The enemy's flag is being flaunted in our faces at all our ports by his ships of war and his vessels of commerce are passing and repassing on the ocean in contempt of our power, and as yet we have not struck a blow" (10:47). The most feared ship in the blockade was the Brooklyn. She could do 14 knots to the Sumter's 9 knots, and it was impossible to slip past at night because of searchlights (6:22,26).

Using reports that the Brooklyn was curious about every sail that passed, Semmes devised an escape plan. He watched the Brooklyn carefully, hoping she would stray too far from the blockade. Early on 30 June Semmes got information the Brooklyn was far at sea chasing a neutral sail. Semmes had kept the boilers ready; therefore, it took minimum time to get up full speed. The Sumter successfully passed the sand bar into the Gulf of Mexico but found the Brooklyn only four miles behind (6:26-28).

The Brooklyn would have easily caught the Sumter except for the superior seamanship of Semmes. From his observation of the Brooklyn, he knew she could not sail close to the wind, but the Sumter could. He turned to take advantage of this maneuver and eventually forced the Brooklyn to give up the chase. Semmes wanted to fire a victory shot but refrained because the munitions

were too scarce. Instead, he had the crew to drink a toast to their success (14:352-353).

The Confederate Navy now had its first ship at sea, but she faced tremendous odds. The US Navy had 76 vessels with 1,783 guns. Also Great Britain had already proclaimed neutrality which gave only belligerent rights to the South. She would allow warships in her ports to resupply but would not receive prizes. Receiving prizes had been customary in the past. Other maritime powers had not yet made a decision on neutrality (10:53).

In spite of these obstacles, Semmes hoped to win recognition for the Confederacy as a nation. He knew international law well and had brought his knowledge up-to-date before sailing. He hoped to gain special concessions for the South because the North was blockading the South's ports. He felt a commissioned warship should not be forced to burn her prizes because she had no home port. If he could convince one nation to give full recognition to the South, maybe Great Britain would change her policy (6:50).

On 3 July the Sumter captured her first prize of many, following a pattern Semmes would use more than 100 times in the next 3 years. When the Sumter sighted the sail of the Golden Rocket, she gave chase and fired a shot across the bow to force the Golden Rocket to lay to. A boarding officer brought back the skipper and his papers. Semmes carefully reviewed the papers to determine nationality and ownership. If the ship was neutral, he sent her on her way. The Golden Rocket was a Yankee clipper from Maine; therefore, he took the captain and crew prisoner and burned the ship. Before burning the ship Semmes saved the chronometer, food, and repair supplies. From the sighting of the sail to the burning of the ship less than 7 hours passed (10:54).

Semmes continued in the Gulf of Mexico south of Cuba and within 48 hours had captured seven American vessels. The cargo on these vessels was neutral so Semmes did not destroy them. Instead, he headed for Cienfuegos, Cuba, with his prizes to test the attitude of Spain toward receiving prizes (6:41-46).

When Semmes reached port and found the Spanish unwilling to accept his prizes, he tried to match wits with the governor. Semmes argued that the South had a right as a belligerent to capture enemy ships. Since the North controlled all the ports of the South, he had no place to safely store prizes of war. It seemed only fair that neutral countries would not allow such an unfair condition to exist. Semmes knew the governor could not make such an important decision without asking Spain. To Semmes' disappointment, Spain followed the lead of England and France in barring prizes from her ports. When the governor received instructions from Spain, he refused to release the prizes to Semmes. As a

result, Semmes decided to leave the port with a civilian agent in charge of his prizes (6:46-51).

While Semmes was in port, he realized the Sumter put him at a disadvantage. After only 5 days at sea she was out of coal. Even though he could buy coal in the port, he realized the enemy could easily track his movements if he had to stop every 5 days. As a result, he decided to reach a commercial cruising ground and lie in wait under sail. He would get up steam only to chase a prospective prize. With this strategy in mind, Semmes left port on 7 July (6:45).

After several days of cruising without capturing an enemy, the Sumter was again out of coal. Semmes put in at the Dutch island of Cucacao. He wanted to refuel and, at the same time, test the political views of the Dutch. When the governor refused to admit the Sumter, Semmes wrote a letter explaining the legal position in regard to neutrals. How could the Dutch admit the US ships without admitting the Confederate ship? To decide on an answer to Semmes' question, the governor held a meeting which lasted several hours. Semmes suspected the US consul had convinced the Dutch to ban the Sumter. This suspicion caused Semmes to make a dramatic gesture. While the meeting was in session, Semmes conducted target practice in which shells passed by the window of the meeting hall. He fired four 8-inch shells hitting a floating practice target with precision. Very soon afterward the Sumter received permission to enter without restrictions (6:57-63). While in this port, Semmes told several people in secret he intended to go back to Cuba. Instead, he headed for the Venezuelan coast (14:357).

In less than a month, the Sumter had captured 10 enemy ships but burned only 1. Semmes later changed this policy, but at this time he still hoped for a legal way the Confederacy could profit from his work. He hoped to find a haven for his prizes and force the owners to pay a ransom for the return of their property (10:64).

Semmes' next stop was Port of Spain, Trinidad, his first British port. He had visited here as a midshipman. There was no objection to his entry, but the British did not give him the customary courtesy of a de jure government. Also he could only purchase items not contraband of war. Semmes did not like the ruling, but he respected the British firepower too much to use the same gesture he had used in the Dutch port. While in port a British warship arrived. In spite of the government's position, the British sailors treated the Confederates as colleagues (6:79-84).

Semmes had a free hand in the calm area around the equator, but he grew tired of the slow progress. In 2 months he captured only two enemy ships which he burned. In addition he had several long chases which turned out to be neutral. It seemed the enemy was avoiding this area. The Sumter, crowded with prisoners and needing coal, headed for Martinique (6:109-120).

While anchored receiving coal, the Sumter made contact with a US warship for the first time since running the blockade at New Orleans. The US cruiser Iroquois approached the Sumter making battle maneuvers hoping Semmes would fire first. Semmes would not compromise his country's position by such an act. Part of his orders was to avoid fighting when possible. He hoped this incident might cause problems between the US and France. According to international law, if two belligerents were in the same port, one could not leave until 24 hours after the other. Also after arriving in port if the ship communicated with shore, she must drop anchor. To avoid dropping anchor, the Iroquois moved outside the international limit but still communicated with shore by messages and signals. Technically this was illegal, but Semmes knew warring nations took advantage of neutral countries according to their strengths. The weak countries argued for strict interpretations of the law. Since the Iroquois made so many violations, Semmes was able to argue for protection and received the minimum he needed. He knew he had to get to sea without fighting (14:358-359).

Semmes picked a rainy night to trick the Iroquois and escape the blockade. Since the Iroquois was guarding the northern end of the harbor, she expected the Sumter to escape south. Also the Iroquois had signal lights on shore to notify her when the Sumter left the port. Semmes, anticipating the strategy of the Iroquois, left the port under full steam and headed south. When blue lights shone from the shore, the Iroquois headed south to intercept the Sumter. As soon as the Sumter was out of sight of land, Semmes turned north. The rain helped hide the maneuver, and the two ships steamed away from each other. By the time the Iroquois realized she had been deceived, the Sumter was gone (14:360).

After this incident, Semmes made another change in his treatment of captured ships. He no longer risked his prize by sending it to a neutral port. If he could not burn the ship, he would bond it. The captain of the captured ship was forced to sign a bond payable at the time of peace negotiations. If the South lost, the bonds were worthless. However, Semmes had great faith the Confederacy would win (1:136-137).

Next Semmes decided on a risky voyage across the Atlantic to Spain. He estimated a 50-day trip with only 7 days coal. Also he risked an encounter with enemy warships with limited means to escape or fight. He crossed the Atlantic in 30 days and stopped

16 ships the first day south of Portugal. Unfortunately, all 16 ships were European (1:138-141).

After the long months at sea the Sumter was in serious need of repair and resupply. Semmes went to Cadiz, Spain, but was ordered to leave in 24 hours. Semmes protested and as a result received just enough repair to make the Sumter seaworthy. Her boilers were not repaired even though they were nearly worn out. Semmes thought Spain was so severe because of pressure from the United States. Finally Semmes angrily left on 17 January, but he left a parting gesture. In the Strait of Gibraltar, he stopped two US vessels. One had British cargo which he bonded. The other contained sulfur which was contraband of war. Semmes burned this ship in sight of Europe and Africa (6:152-170).

Semmes docked at Gibraltar and received the friendliest reception of any port so far on his cruise. British sympathy was with the Confederacy at this time of the war. In spite of the friendly reception for Semmes, the Sumter was refused coal. In addition, a group of his men sent to buy coal was arrested. Also the ship was in desperate need of repair. Even if she could have sailed away from Gibraltar, she would have been easy prey for US warships in the area. With much regret Semmes decided to leave the Sumter in port. He paid off the crew and gave orders for the officers to return to the Confederacy for duty (6:171-192).

During the 6 months of cruising, the Sumter amassed a respectable record. She had captured 18 enemy ships, although she only destroyed a small portion of them (see Table 1). The fact the Sumter was on the sea began to paralyze enemy shipping. Many ships were being laid up or changed to neutral registry. In addition the enemy kept five or six of its best ships constantly in pursuit of the Sumter. The expense to the Confederacy was approximately \$28,000, the value of just one of her prizes (6:193).

3 Jul 61	Golden Rocket	Burned
4 Jul 61	Cuba	Recaptured by enemy
4 Jul 61	Machias	Interned and Lost
5 Jul 61	Ben Dunning	Interned and Lost
5 Jul 61	Albert Adams	Interned and Lost
6 Jul 61	Naiad	Interned and Lost
6 Jul 61	West Wind	Interned and Lost
6 Jul 61	Louise Kilham	Interned and Lost
25 Jul 61	Abby Bradford	Recaptured by enemy
27 Jul 61	Joseph Maxwell	Interned and Lost
25 Sep 61	Joseph Parks	Burned
27 Oct 61	Daniel Trowbridge	Burned
25 Nov 61	Montmorenci	Bonded
26 Nov 61	Arcade	Burned
3 Dec 61	Vigilance	Burned
8 Dec 61	Ebenezer Dodge	Burned
18 Jan 62	Neapolitan	Burned
18 Jan 62	Investigator	Bonded

Table 1. Captures of the Sumter (10:282)

## Chapter Three

### SEMMEs AND THE ALABAMA

While Semmes was at sea in the Sumter, work had been taking place in England that would improve the future of commerce destroying for the Confederacy. In May 1861 Secretary Mallory sent Captain James Bulloch to England as a secret agent. His orders were to purchase warships or have them built (1:75-76). Since neutral countries could not openly approve of such activity, Bulloch had to negotiate secretly with shipbuilders for vessels of his own design (1:79). In June 1861 he completed negotiations for a sloop combining the advantages of steam and sail. Thus, work began on "290" in the shipyard of Messrs Laird at Birkenhead, England (1:81-82). The ship was christened the Enrica on 15 May 1862 (3:166). On 28 July the Enrica left the harbor, pretending to be on a trial run. By all appearances she was just another commerce vessel. She cruised for several hours in sight of land innocently running through tests. During the night she slipped away headed for the Azores and a rendezvous with the Agrippina (1:172). Bulloch had dispatched the Agrippina with arms and supplies to turn the Enrica into a commerce destroyer (1:168).

Semmes, leaving Gibraltar and the Sumter, headed for South Hampton, England, believing his naval career was over. Semmes knew of Bulloch's work in England but thought Bulloch was building "290" for himself. As a result, Semmes had decided to return to Richmond and ask for a commission in the land forces. After a month-long vacation in England, Semmes left England for the Confederacy by way of the Bahamas (1:158-161).

In the Bahamas, Semmes received dispatches from Secretary Mallory ordering him back to sea duty. Mallory ordered Semmes to assume command of the new raider, Enrica. Semmes advised the Secretary he would return to duty immediately with several of his officers from the Sumter (16:40).

On 20 August Semmes saw his future command for the first time. He observed her "with no little interest as she was to be not only my home, but my bride, as it were . . . she was indeed a beautiful thing to look upon" (12:35). As soon as he arrived, he began to convert the Enrica, renamed the Alabama, into an armed cruiser (12:37).

Semmes had used international law to his advantage many times; however, while converting the Alabama, he made a mockery of Portuguese neutrality. He loaded munitions and mounted guns within the harbor. When the Portuguese government protested, he pretended to be only a merchant ship loading coal (1:179-180).

On 24 August Semmes christened the Alabama at sea with an official ceremony. All the officers had newly designed uniforms trimmed with gold lace. Semmes summoned all hands on deck and read his orders giving him command of the Alabama. On Semmes' signal a cannon fired, a band played "Dixie," and the Confederate flag replaced the Union Jack (12:39-40).

Semmes' next order of business was enlisting a crew since none except the officers were Confederates. Semmes knew it would be impossible to run the ship without most of the men present. He began his speech by reviewing the causes of the war between the North and South. Then, he explained the advantages an individual on the Alabama might expect. A crewmember might receive double the ordinary wages in gold, prize money from destroyed ships, adventure around the world, and the excitement of battle. After the speech, 80 of the 90 enlisted (12:41-42). Most of the men were British, Irish, and Welsh, but practically all European countries were represented (4:494).

The Alabama began its cruise with a plan to attack the US whaling fleet northeast of the Azores (12:49). On 5 September Semmes sighted his first prize (12:51). He showed the US flag until he was certain of the capture; then, he showed the Confederate flag (12:52). This was an old custom of the sea used to deceive an enemy until he was in range of the guns. This custom was permissible at sea but not on land. Most ships carried a variety of flags and flew the one that would cause the least suspicion for that part of the world. Before taking offensive action, it was honorable to fly the true flag (10:100).

Semmes treated the crew of the captured ship kindly since this was the first prize of the Alabama. He allowed the crew to pack the whaleboats with all the provisions they desired. Then, Semmes towed the boats close to shore and cut them loose (12:56).

After burning eight whalers in 2 weeks, Semmes was ready to destroy the main traffic between the US and Europe (12:51-77). Heading northwest, Semmes soon spotted two US vessels bound for Europe. The Alabama easily captured both ships because of her speed advantage. One ship was bonded and released because of a neutral cargo. The other was burned. This ship was valued at \$93,000 plus a cargo of grain worth at least \$50,000. Semmes enjoyed destroying this type of cargo because he thought the money would have gone for the purchase of munitions (12:85-86).



Because the Alabama wasted a great deal of time chasing neutral ships, Semmes delegated the sighting of sails to a seaman with a special talent for the job. Master's Mate James Evans had an uncanny ability to tell if a ship were Yankee or neutral. Semmes got to the point he refused to chase ships based on Evans' decision (1:212).

Semmes and the Alabama began to achieve notoriety because he so boldly sailed down the American coast. Because of his presence, insurance rates were very high. Many vessels changed to British registry, and most US owners forged ownership papers on their cargo (12:109). When Semmes suspected a cargo had false documents, he evaluated the evidence like a judge. He wrote a Confederate States Admiralty Court decree on each case to make his actions legal. If the ship's documents were false, he burned the ship and cargo (12:109). As a result of Semmes' actions, trade carrying by the US steadily diminished for the rest of the war. In fact, Semmes was credited with the ability to go anywhere he pleased, when he pleased (10:111).

During the cruise the Alabama maintained a full complement of sailors because of enlistments from captured ships. Semmes welcomed the recruits but did not encourage them. He would not accept Northerners even though several volunteered. During the 2-year cruise, 99 recruits came this way (5:xii).

The Alabama cruised for almost 3 months without making port to refuel and resupply. Semmes was able to do this because he took supplies from captured ships (12:120). Also the Alabama had been designed with special features to cruise for long periods of time. The ship had her own repair facility to fix almost anything on board. Also, she had a system to turn salt water into fresh water (1:182). Semmes increased the cruising time by using steam only during critical situations (12:48). Because he knew the Alabama would eventually need resupply, Semmes had prearranged with the Agrippina to meet in Martinique (12:119). The Alabama anchored in Fort-de-France on 18 November (12:136).

Unfortunately for Semmes, the captain of the Agrippina forced Semmes to alter his plans. The captain had bragged at the bar about his relationship to the Alabama and announced when he expected the Alabama. Realizing the potential danger of the situation, Semmes did not resupply but established another rendezvous at a deserted island off the coast of Venezuela (1:239). Before Semmes could leave the port, he was blockaded by the San Jacinta, a US warship. Semmes merely waited until dark. Then, he gathered a full head of steam and outran the enemy (12:142-143).

Semmes met the Agrippina and spent 5 days refueling. He used this time to give the men shore leave which they spent hunting and fishing. After taking about half the supplies from the Agrippina, Semmes sent her on to the next rendezvous point (12:143-146).

Semmes' next objective was the gold traffic running from Colon to New York. These steamers carried gold which had been transported from the Pacific side across the Isthmus of Panama. Sometimes they had up to \$1 million in gold (1:249). The Alabama's first contact was one of these steamers going in the wrong direction to be transporting gold. She was the Ariel worth \$250,000 and loaded with 500 passengers. One hundred forty of these passengers were US marines (12:155).

Semmes was very anxious to burn this ship because of the morale effect his action would have on the enemy. The Ariel belonged to a Mr Vanderbilt of New York, a bitter enemy of the South. Mr Vanderbilt had become rich because of war contracts. Burning the ship was a problem for Semmes because of the large number of passengers. Semmes hoped to capture another ship to transport the passengers. He placed a small crew on the Ariel with orders to stay close to the Alabama (12:155-158). Semmes did not find another prize soon; therefore, he bonded the Ariel for \$261,000 (1:257). Semmes took the weapons from the marines and placed them on parole for the rest of the war (5:64).

From newspapers seized on prizes, Semmes learned of General Banks' plan to invade Texas through the port of Galveston. Semmes planned to attack the convoy in the Gulf of Mexico before it could reach Galveston (12:146). When Semmes reached Galveston on 11 January 1863, he realized the North had changed plans because US warships were shelling the city. While he was surveying the situation from a distance, one of the warships, the Hatteras, decided to give chase to the Alabama. Semmes decoyed the Hatteras away from shore by using sail only. The Hatteras thought the Alabama was short on coal (12:164-165).

As soon as the Hatteras came close, Semmes knew he had the advantage and prepared for battle. The Hatteras was equal in size to the Alabama but inferior in design. She was a side-wheeler with most of her machinery above the waterline. Semmes allowed the Hatteras to close to within 50 yards before he opened fire. The Alabama fired several broadsides in rapid succession. After 13 minutes the Hatteras raised a white light to indicate the fight was over. The Alabama picked up the crew of the Hatteras just before she sank, and Semmes treated the prisoners with respect. Semmes headed for Jamaica to unload the prisoners and get some much needed rest (15:22-27).

After the events with the Ariel and the Hatteras, Semmes knew the Gulf of Mexico would be dangerous for the Alabama; therefore, he decided to leave the Gulf of Mexico and proceed to the Cape of Good Hope. To avoid enemy warships, he avoided the normal sea lanes. In spite of this, in the next several months he captured and burned or bonded 28 US commerce ships (12:185-257). Also, he placed two captured cannons and a small crew on one of the prizes and commissioned her as a commerce destroyer (12:249).

Semmes enjoyed a welcome rest of 2 months in and about the ports of South Africa, and the Alabama was repaired and resupplied (12:257-291). As he was preparing to leave for a cruise in the Indian Ocean, 14 seamen deserted (12:292). Although it was illegal to recruit seamen in a neutral port, Semmes got around the law by calling the new recruits passengers. He enlisted 11 men out of the bars of Cape Town by paying their overdue bills (1:319-320).

During the cruise in the Indian Ocean, Semmes seemed to alter his strategy of avoiding the enemy. He learned that a US warship, the Wyoming, was in the area, stopping every ship, looking for the Alabama. Even though the Wyoming was an even match for the Alabama, Semmes did not make any effort to avoid contact (12:308). The Alabama never saw the Wyoming during several months in the Orient (5:148).

During the chase of the Contest, Semmes realized time for the Alabama was running out. Most ships during the Alabama's career had given up without a chase because of the obvious advantage of the Alabama. The Contest decided to run for it. Under sail only, the Alabama slowly lost ground. Even with steam and sail, the Alabama barely stayed even with a ship of sail only (12:314-315). What Semmes had feared for weeks had finally happened. The boilers were rotten from using salt water. Also the copper plates on the ship's bottom were loose. The Alabama needed a major overhaul in a drydock (12:329-330).

Semmes, sick of commerce-chasing and depressed by the condition of the Alabama, was looking for a fight. He did not go out of his way to find a fight, but he lingered in the area south of Indo-China. On 22 December 1863 he docked in Singapore. He found 22 large US merchant ships dismantled and laid up. He learned from port authorities that conditions were the same in other Asian ports. These authorities said the panic was due entirely to the presence of the Alabama. No Yankee ship could get a cargo or insurance for trade to China (1:330-331).

Even though the Alabama was greatly feared, Semmes knew the triumph was soon to end; thus, he headed back to Europe for an overhaul. Semmes' reputation had spread to such an extent the Alabama did not see a Yankee sail for over 3 months (12:343-364). On 22 April 1864 the Alabama captured a US ship, the Rockingham.

Instead of burning the ship, Semmes decided to use it for target practice. During the shelling, many of the rounds failed to explode because the powder was old and deteriorated. After several bad rounds, Semmes stopped the shelling and ordered the ship burned. From this point Semmes continued to the English Channel without a significant incident (12:364-365).

Three days after the Alabama entered the harbor at Cherbourg, France, the USS Kearsarge, commanded by Captain John Winslow, arrived. Semmes examined the Kearsarge with binoculars and decided the two ships were evenly matched (1:349). Even though his superiors had ordered him to avoid a fight, Semmes felt not fighting would be disgraceful (1:354). During the rest of the week until Sunday, 19 June, the Alabama's crew prepared for battle (12:368-370).

At 0945 on Sunday the Alabama left port to battle the Kearsarge. The ships closed to within 500 yards of each other and exchanged fire. The Alabama shot more often than the Kearsarge, but many of the rounds did not explode. The Alabama actually scored a hit that would have been fatal if the shell had exploded. After about 45 minutes, an 11-inch shell tore a large hole in the side of the Alabama. Semmes attempted to make shore, but the Kearsarge blocked his route. Realizing the Alabama was lost, Semmes ordered his men to abandon ship. An English yacht watching the battle rescued Semmes and took him to safety in England (12:371-381).

During the 2-year cruise, the Alabama consumed 1,786 tons of coal, sailed almost 3 times around the world, and took 2,000 prisoners (5:xxiii). She burned 52 merchant ships, bonded 10 merchant ships, and captured and commissioned 1 merchant ship (see Table 2). Also she sank a US warship (6:199). At the time, the destroyed prizes were estimated at \$4,631,491 (5:185).

In January 1865 Semmes returned to the South and received command of the James River Squadron near Richmond, Virginia. He burned his squadron as the Yankees invaded Richmond, and he became a brigadier general under the command of General Joe Johnston. This army soon surrendered at Greensboro, North Carolina (12:408-431).

For a short time after the war Semmes was imprisoned for violating laws of war. The Supreme Court and President Johnson dismissed the charges and released Semmes. Semmes tried teaching college and editing for a newspaper but eventually returned to the practice of law in Mobile, Alabama. He finished his Memoirs of Service Afloat in 1869. He died on 30 August 1877 at the age of 68 (1:386-387).

5 Sep 62	Ocmulgee	Burned
7 Sep 62	Starlight	Burned
8 Sep 62	Ocean Rover	Burned
9 Sep 62	Alert	Burned
9 Sep 62	Weathergauge	Burned
13 Sep 62	Altamaha	Burned
14 Sep 62	Benjamin Tucker	Burned
16 Sep 62	Courser	Burned
17 Sep 62	Virginia	Burned
18 Sep 62	Elisha Dunbar	Burned
3 Oct 62	Brilliant	Burned
3 Oct 62	Emily Farnum	Bonded
7 Oct 62	Wave Crest	Burned
7 Oct 62	Dunkirk	Burned
9 Oct 62	Tonawanda	Bonded
11 Oct 62	Manchester	Burned
15 Oct 62	Lamplighter	Burned
23 Oct 62	Lafayette	Burned
26 Oct 62	Crenshaw	Burned
28 Oct 62	Lauretta	Burned
29 Oct 62	Baron de Castine	Bonded
2 Nov 62	Levi Starbuck	Burned
8 Nov 62	T. B. Wales	Burned
21 Nov 62	Clara L. Sparks	Released
30 Nov 62	Parker Cook	Burned
5 Dec 62	Union	Bonded
5 Dec 62	Nina	Bonded
7 Dec 62	Ariel	Bonded
11 Jan 63	Hatteras	Sunk in action
26 Jan 63	Golden Rule	Burned
27 Jan 63	Chastelaine	Burned
3 Feb 63	Palmetto	Burned
21 Feb 63	Olive Jane	Burned
21 Feb 63	Golden Eagle	Burned
27 Feb 63	Washington	Bonded
1 Mar 63	Bethia Thayer	Bonded
2 Mar 63	John A. Parks	Burned
15 Mar 63	Punjab	Bonded
23 Mar 63	Morning Star	Bonded
25 Mar 63	Nora	Burned
26 Mar 63	Charles Hill	Burned
26 Mar 63	Kingfisher	Burned
4 Apr 63	Louisa Hatch	Burned
15 Apr 63	Lafayette	Burned
15 Apr 63	Kate Cory	Burned
24 Apr 63	Nye	Burned
26 Apr 63	Dorcas Prince	Burned
3 May 63	Union Jack	Burned

Table 2. Captures of the Alabama (page 1 of 2) (10,282-284)

3 May 63	Sea Lark	Burned
25 May 63	S. Gilderslieve	Burned
25 May 63	Justina	Bonded
29 May 63	Jabez Snow	Burned
2 Jun 63	Amazonian	Burned
5 Jun 63	Talisman	Burned
19 Jun 63	Conrad	Commissioned as cruiser
2 Jul 63	Anna F. Schmidt	Burned
6 Jul 63	Express	Burned
5 Aug 63	Sea Bride	Sold
9 Aug 63	Martha Wenzell	Released
6 Nov 63	Amanda	Burned
10 Nov 63	Winged Racer	Burned
11 Nov 63	Contest	Burned
18 Nov 63	Harriet Spalding	Released
24 Dec 63	Martaban	Burned
26 Dec 63	Highlander	Burned
26 Dec 63	Sonora	Burned
14 Jan 64	Emma Jane	Burned
23 Apr 64	Rockingham	Burned
27 Apr 64	Tycoon	Burned

Table 2. Captures of the Alabama (page 2 of 2)

## Chapter Four

### SEMME'S LEADERSHIP

From May 1861 to June 1864 the Sumter and the Alabama were extremely successful destroying US commerce while avoiding the enemy. In combat, weapon systems enhance human ability; therefore, when analyzing the effectiveness of a weapon system one should consider the human element (19:1). In the success of the Sumter and the Alabama, the dominant human element was the leadership of Raphael Semmes. After the war Captain Bulloch, who built the Alabama, wrote the following about Semmes' ability:

As a mere sea-officer under the ordinary requirements of the naval profession, he was not especially distinguished. He had neither the physique nor the dashing manner which combine to make a showy, brilliant deck officer, and in the gift of handling a ship in fancy evolutions he had no special excellence. But in broad, comprehensive knowledge of all the subjects embraced in a thorough naval education, in tact, in judgement, acquaintance with diplomatic usage and the requirements of international law and comity--in capacity to generalize and to form plans, and in the latent nerve and mental vigor necessary to impress his views upon those under him, and thus to carry them out effectively, he had few if any equals in that service in which he passed the greater portion of his life. . . . In fact, he was capable of much more than sailing or fighting a single ship. He had the faculties and acquirements which fit a man for high command, and if circumstances had ever placed him at the head of a fleet, I feel sure that he would have achieved important and notable results (3:288-290).

One of Semmes' qualities identified by Bulloch was his ability to generalize and form long-range plans. Commerce destroying was not a new strategy, but Semmes perfected the operation. From his cruise in the Sumter he learned the advantages and disadvantages of this type of warfare. Using what he had learned, Semmes had a well-developed plan for the Alabama. He studied the sea lanes and knew where the commerce would be. Also he carefully judged the time for news of his actions to reach the enemy. Before the enemy could respond, he moved to a new location (11:222). He

had to make decisions with limited information because of long periods at sea. He seldom received instructions from his superiors since he never entered a Confederate port (5:xii). To keep from entering ports where the enemy might blockade him, Semmes carefully planned for logistics. At first he sent the Agrippina ahead to his next location. Later he took most of his supplies from ships he captured. If he had to go into port, he successfully bargained with neutral countries for the supplies he needed (11:223). Using this plan, he continued on his mission until the Alabama needed major repairs in a European port. In 1894 Kaiser Wilhelm II stated his appreciation for the strategies of Semmes when he said, "At every conference with my admirals I counsel them to read and study closely Semmes' Memoirs of Service Afloat. I myself feel constant delight in reading and rereading the mighty career of the wonderful Stormy Petrel" (10:182).

Semmes, his own intelligence officer, made all decisions and held himself accountable for mistakes. According to Lieutenant Sinclair, the sailing master, never once did anyone on board know the destination of the Alabama (1:207). Semmes was cut off from his own ports and alone at sea for long periods of time; therefore, he relied on captured newspapers for intelligence about the enemy. Semmes wrote, "Perhaps this was the only war in which the newspaper ever explained, beforehand, all the movements of the armies and fleets to the enemy" (12:95). With the information from newspapers he was better able to choose the cruising grounds for the Alabama. Even though Semmes occasionally asked advice from his next in command, Lieutenant Kell, Semmes relied on his own judgement. Semmes even took the celestial sightings for position, stating he could sleep better knowing he had taken the position (6:32). Before going into battle against the Kearsarge, Semmes took full responsibility should they fail:

Gentlemen, tomorrow we fight the Kearsarge. Only the good God knows what the outcome will be. Thus far He has shielded us. I believe He still watches over us. I have taken this responsibility alone. It was the only way out, with honor. If I have done wrong, if I fail, the fault will be mine. The Alabama's record speaks for itself. You can be proud of it. It is my intention, with God's help, and yours, to sink or capture the Kearsarge (1:354).

Before going to bed the night before the battle, Semmes went to a Catholic church to pray (1:355).

Although Semmes had some talents which he inherited, he was well prepared for his assigned duty because he had developed his abilities through education and experience. He had 36 years experience with sail and steam in the Navy. He not only knew how to sail a ship but also how to command a crew. During his



training he visited many of the same places he would later use during the war. He knew the waters and the ports of the Gulf of Mexico. This sailing experience helped him take advantage of his strengths and avoid his weaknesses. He judged his ship versus the enemy and decided to run, stay, or fight. Since the Sumter was slow, he had to outsmart the enemy. Since the Alabama was fast and well-armed, he could run or fight the enemy. In addition to his sailing experience, Semmes was self-educated in many subjects; for example: international law, geography, oceanography, and politics. He used his skill in international law and politics to successfully bargain for his rights in neutral ports. He knew which countries would most likely be sympathetic to the Confederate cause. Besides these skills he had well-developed writing and speaking skills.

Semmes' ability to speak effectively was a positive contribution to his leadership. When the Alabama needed crewmembers, he gave a short speech covering the good and bad of the cruise ahead. He promised excitement and adventure, but most of all money. He would pay double wages in advance. Also he promised the Confederate government would vote prize money for them after the war. After the speech 80 men enlisted (1:185). Before the Alabama's final battle with the Kearsarge, Semmes gave the following fighting speech to all hands:

Officers and seamen of the Alabama! You have at length another opportunity of meeting the enemy! The first that has been presented to you since you sank the Hatteras! In the meanwhile you have been all over the world, and it is not too much to say that you have destroyed and driven for protection under neutral flags, one half of the enemy's commerce, which at the beginning of the war, covered every sea. This is an achievement of which you may well be proud, and a grateful country will not be unmindful of it. The name of your ship has become a household word wherever civilization extends. Shall that name be tarnished by defeat? The thing is impossible. Remember that you are in the English Channel, the theatre of so much of the naval glory of our race, and that the eyes of all Europe are at this moment, upon you. The flag that floats over you is that of a young Republic, who bids defiance to her enemies, whenever, and wherever found. Show the world you know how to uphold it! Go to your quarters (12:372)!

The crew went into battle cheering Semmes and the Alabama (1:363).

Semmes used his writing skills to document his decisions, correspond with officials, and keep records. Even before the Civil War Semmes demonstrated his writing ability. After the Mexican War he wrote Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican

War (1:32). While he was captain of the Sumter and Alabama, he wrote a judicial decree on each prize (10:285). Some of the ports he entered would not give him his rights under international law. Through official letters he explained his rights and often convinced an official to change his mind. As he was cruising around in various parts of the world, he kept a log of his thoughts and key actions. In this log he wrote about storms, plants, ocean currents, winds, and tides. Some of these descriptions included plans and diagrams (12:--). After the war he wrote Memoirs of Service Afloat During the War Between the States describing his cruise and justifying his actions.

Semmes was a man of conscience and high principles. He conducted his affairs with concern for obeying international law. Probably much of his documentation and careful judging of prizes was to convince himself as well as others he was doing the right thing (2:229). When he saw the Alabama was lost during its battle with the Kearsarge, Semmes' main concern was for the welfare of his crew. As he commanded Lieutenant Kell to surrender the ship, Semmes said, "It will never do in this nineteenth century for us to go down and the deck covered with our gallant wounded" (1:370).

Although Semmes' enlisted crew did not share his cause and patriotism, he was able to maintain an effective crew through his strict discipline and leadership example. One of his crew described the sailors as unruly and mutinous when they enlisted for duty on the Alabama.

I had been looking over the crew, and made up my mind that, on the whole, I had never seen such a bad lot. They were all sailors from clew to earring,--no hay-makers among them,--but they were mostly of that class, found in seaport towns all over the world, that ship from port to port, and not for the voyage, and are always a rough, mutinous set (18:902).

Even though all the officers were Confederates and fought for the cause of the South, the enlisted crew were not Confederates and had signed on for the possibility of prize money (1:186).

Semmes believed in authoritarian leadership at sea, and on his ship he expected strict obedience to his orders. He had a staff of armed officers to help enforce the laws which were similar to the laws aboard US Navy ships. If someone violated a law, he was immediately seized and placed in irons. If the offense was serious, Semmes held a courtmartial within 24 hours (1:192). Semmes was strict because he felt good discipline was a necessity of combat. In fact, he felt the South lost battles on land for lack of discipline (6:19).

Semmes avoided many discipline problems because he knew the sailor's needs and supplied them when possible. He gave generous shore leaves when the ship was in port to resupply. Although drunkenness was distasteful to him, he allowed the men to get drunk during shore leaves. Crew members could not have their own supply of alcohol on ship, but as part of the enlistment contract Semmes served each man a small amount of rum twice a day. If quarrels broke out between sailors, Semmes allowed them to fight once they were on shore. He felt a few black eyes and broken noses were worth the help to morale (6:123).

In 3 years the crew made only one serious attempt at mutiny which failed because of Semmes' quick thinking and knowledge of his men. During the Alabama's first rendezvous with the Agrippina, the crew smuggled some liquor on board. After the sailors were drunk, one sailor convinced the others it would be easy to take over the ship. The crew attacked the officers with fists and clubs. When Semmes realized what was happening, he ordered the drum and fife to beat to quarters. The men were so disciplined they staggered to their duty stations when they heard the drum beat. Then, the armed officers quickly gained control of the ship. Semmes punished the leaders of the mutiny until they begged for mercy. He never had another mutiny (10:120). After the war Lieutenant Sinclair, the sailing master on the Alabama, wrote the following about Semmes' discipline:

No better proof of the judicial methods of discipline outlined by Semmes could be submitted, than that under them, though engaged in acts somewhat suggesting the pranks of the buccaneers, our crews were as well held in hand as though serving on an English man-of-war in times of perfect peace, and at the same time in a state of perfect contentment (2:233).

Although the crew enlisted for the prize money, they learned to serve Semmes out of loyalty to him. The crew believed Semmes was infallible. Time after time he brought them an easy victory. Even in dangerous situations he remained calm and poised. They knew he took chances, but he always got them out safely. Also they respected him for his devotion to God. They knew Semmes relied on Divine guidance. He began each day on his knees before a little shrine in his cabin (1:100). Before going into battle against the Kearsarge, Semmes asked one of his junior officers how he thought they would do. The officer replied, "I can't answer the question, sir. I can assure you the crew will do their full duty and follow you to the death" (1:358).

Semmes believed wholeheartedly in the cause of the Confederacy. Past the age when many would be retired from military service, he served 3 years at sea. Often the living conditions were inhospitable. Also he longed to be with his family. The following words from his diary express his devotion to his country:

My dear family I consign with confidence to God's care, and our beloved country I feel certain he will protect and preserve, and in due time raise up to peace, independence, and prosperity. Our struggle must be just and holy in His sight, and He governs the world by inexorable laws of right and wrong, the wicked and cruel people who are seeking our destruction cannot fail to be beaten back and destroyed. But it may be His pleasure to scourge us severely for our past sins and unworthiness, and to admit us to His favor again, only when we have been purified (2:240).

In spite of Semmes' effectiveness at commerce destroying, historians disagree on his overall effect on the war. In the 1890s Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan concluded, from his study of naval warfare, commerce destroying had made no difference in the War of 1812 and had not influenced the outcome of the Civil War. In 1861 Semmes believed commerce destroying had been effective in other wars and planned to use the tactic. Obviously the German U-boat planners of the twentieth century agreed with Semmes since the U-boats were some of the most effective commerce destroyers ever (17:21).

## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

From May 1861 to June 1864 Raphael Semmes, as captain of the Sumter and Alabama, did considerable damage to the commerce of the United States. This success by Semmes was not magical or accidental. Although Semmes did not know if he would be needed in war, he was prepared for his mission. He took advantage of opportunities to develop his talents. He added support to a belief of S.L.A. Marshall about leadership. Marshall said, "I reject altogether the idea that leaders are born, not made. . . ." (9:10). Semmes became the professional man described by Samuel P. Huntington. "The professional man is an expert with specialized knowledge and skill in a significant field of human endeavor. His expertise is acquired only by prolonged education and experience" (7:8).

Semmes was able to make the hard decisions with limited information. S.L.A. Marshall says this quality is important for combat leaders.

Finally, it comes to that, for the willingness to accept calculated risks is of the essence of effective personal performances in the military profession. There must be careful collection of data. There must be weighty consideration of all the known and knowable factors in the given situation. But beyond these things, what? To convey the idea that an officer must by ingrained habit dispose himself to take action only after he has arrived at an exact formula pointing exclusively in one direction would mean that never under the conditions of war could he get off his trousers-seat. For such fullness of information and confidence of situation are not given to combat commanders once in a lifetime (9:220).

Besides just making tough decisions Semmes anticipated the enemy and took appropriate action. S.L.A. Marshall said, "Sixty percent of the art of command is the ability to anticipate; forty percent of the art of command is the ability to improvise" (8:108).

Since Semmes could not do his mission alone, he needed the obedience of his crew. Semmes knew his men and provided for their physical and emotional needs. When they disobeyed, he effectively used discipline. Semmes gained his men's dedication and loyalty because of his character. He was a model of professionalism, integrity, and patriotism. His men knew he had faith in God and was not hypocritical about his worship.

According to S.L.A. Marshall in The Officer As a Leader, there is one quality a leader cannot do without. "It is the ability to carry out an assigned task and do it completely" (9:13). Whether Raphael Semmes, as captain of the Sumter and the Alabama, affected the outcome of the war is debatable. Clearly Raphael Semmes did his assigned mission and did it well. The author believes today's leaders can gain valuable insight from studying the leadership of Admiral Raphael Semmes.

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